

combat decorations given to others during the course of that war.

What Senator JOHN KERRY did was to volunteer to serve our country, put his life on the line, face combat, stand up and fight for his fellow sailors on that swift boat, and then come back to the criticism, the chief criticism of a group known as the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth.

Now, if the Senator from Texas is going to be filled with rage over those who would cast any disparaging remarks about our military, he should be consistent. He should amend his amendment—and I will seek to do it for him, incidentally—to add the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth as a group that should be repudiated. If we are going to get into this business of following the headlines, responding to advertisements and repudiating organizations, let's at least be consistent.

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, will my friend yield?

Mr. DURBIN. I will yield.

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I wish to thank my colleague very much for pointing out the inconsistency of an attack on one organization that I guess my friend doesn't admire anyway, and that is his right. It is also our right to speak the truth on this floor. The fact of the matter is the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth went after a war hero and told stories to the American people that were not true and tried to sully a hero's reputation.

But he is not the only Senator who was attacked, as my friend remembers what happened to our colleague, Max Cleland. I know he does. Here is a veteran who gave three limbs for his country—three limbs. It is harder for him, for the first 2 hours of every day, to get ready for the day than it is for the Senator from Texas or myself or the Senator from Illinois to do our work for a month. Yet this man was viciously attacked and his patriotism called into question. Oh, yes, my friend might say, it was during a political campaign. It was disgusting. So we raise these issues.

What I wish to ask my friend is this: I was thinking—as the Senator from Texas, my friend and colleague, was speaking—I was thinking about some retired generals who spoke out against this war and said they were called traitors and worse. So I am looking at ways to incorporate into this a condemnation of anyone who would attack a retired general for speaking out against a war because I think that was low and it was horrible. It was frightening because, in a way, it was saying to these retired generals that they had no voice, no independent voice.

So I wish to thank my colleague, and I wonder if he recalls these generals. I will have more details as I put together my second-degree amendment as well.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I would say in response to my colleague from California that if we are going to get into the business of standing up for members of the military, past and

present, who were attacked for their positions on issues, then so be it. Let's be consistent about it. Let's remember our fellow colleague from Georgia, Senator Max Cleland, and remember what happened to him, when someone, during the course of a campaign, ran an ad suggesting he was somehow consorting with Osama bin Laden—a man who had lost three limbs to a grenade in Vietnam and who was attacked in a way that none of us will ever be able to forget.

The Senator from Texas includes in his whereas clauses, his sense-of-the-Senate clauses, to strongly condemn any effort to attack the honor and integrity of all the members of the U.S. Armed Forces. I hope if that is his true goal, he will allow us to amend his resolution to not only include the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth but those who attacked Senator Max Cleland during the course of his campaign.

I don't think the fact that it happens during a campaign absolves anybody from the responsibility of telling the truth and honoring those who served. In this case, two Democrats, Senator Max Cleland and Senator JOHN KERRY, were attacked, and there wasn't a long line of people on the floor to condemn the attackers. Now that the Senator from Texas has decided we should bring this up as part of the Defense authorization bill, I hope he will be consistent, and I hope he will consistently stand up for the reputations of the men and women in uniform, starting with General Petraeus but including those who served in this war and other wars in the past.

Each of them deserves our respect. I might add, parenthetically—it is worth saying—even if we disagree with their political views, they still deserve our respect. To attack their honor and integrity is wrong.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, last year the Senate enacted legislation that stripped the courts of jurisdiction to hear pending habeas claims brought by unlawful enemy combatants. It was with sadness then, as it is now, that the Senate failed to restore and protect this great writ. The writ of habeas corpus is a cornerstone of the rule of law. The right of an individual to learn of his or her detention by the government in a court of law is fundamental to our Constitution. Permanent detention of foreigners, without reason or charges, undermines our moral integrity in the world and does violence to our Constitution. It troubles me greatly that we have limited the ability of the judicial branch to ensure that detainees are being held fairly and justly by the American Government. It is my sincere hope that we will take up this amendment again in the near future.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate is now in a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Texas is recognized.

CHARACTER ASSASSINATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I will not speak long because I know my friend from Iowa is here to speak in morning business.

I do want to say that Senators certainly have every right to offer any amendment they choose, but they don't have a right to require me to modify my amendment.

I am sorry they don't acknowledge the difference between somebody who has volunteered to become a public figure, a political candidate running for election, and somebody such as General Petraeus who in the performance of his duty is reporting to the Congress on the progress in a war in which 170,000 Americans are exposed to loss of life and limb right now.

To try to resurrect the old political battles of the past with regard to what happened in the Georgia Senate race, or what happened in the race for President of the United States, we are not going to achieve consensus here. Those were political races and those people are public figures. I don't like it when I am criticized any more than my colleagues do, including Senator KERRY or Senator Cleland. But that is an apples-and-oranges comparison to somebody who is wearing the uniform of a U.S. soldier who is performing his duty to report to Congress on the progress of military operations in Iraq.

So we may head down that road. As I said, it is every right of my colleagues to offer other amendments. We will take those as they come. But I hope all of our colleagues will, as an act of solidarity and support for General Petraeus and our men and women in uniform, vote for my resolution and condemn this character assassination on the name of a good man.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM TAX

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I am here to follow through on a promise I made back on June 13. At that time, after several speeches on the alternative minimum tax, I said I was going to continue talking about the alternative minimum tax until Congress took action to protect the roughly 19 million families and individuals who will be hit by it in 2007 who did not have to pay it in 2006—19 million families now affected who weren't affected last year.